

# Implementation of CLIL in Castilla-La Mancha (Spain) and teacher training

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## Abstract

This article is the result of the first stage of ongoing research in schools in the region of Castilla La-Mancha, a non bilingual region located in the centre of Spain, in order to ascertain the extent to which CLIL has been established as part of the general curriculum. We analysed schools of primary and secondary education in Cuenca, one of the region's provinces, and contacted the teachers responsible for the "Secciones Europeas" programme in a number of state primary schools and secondary education centres of the other four provinces which make up the region (Albacete, Ciudad Real, Guadalajara and Toledo). Through contact with the regional Department of Education responsible for the programme we have drawn general conclusions as to how it is currently being carried out, and, having identified the weaknesses, propose some recommendations for organization, teacher training and future implementation, all of which will be followed up in a second phase of research.

**Key words:** CLIL, Castilla-La Mancha (Spain), "Secciones Europeas", primary and secondary schools, teacher training

## Introduction

The foreign language teaching situation in Spain is currently subject to different laws of education for each stage: the *LOE* in the first cycle of Primary Education (6-8), and the *LOGSE* in the second and third cycle (8-12) of Primary Education and Compulsory Secondary Education (12-16). The cycle of non compulsory education, (Infant Education) for pupils from 3 to 6 years, comes under the *Royal Decree* of 23rd April, 2004.

Although the laws are made by the Spanish State Government, modifications in the contents and curriculum for each cycle of children's education are performed by each Autonomous Community Region. It is understood that the modifications tend to adopt European Union recommendations, such as those contained in the Sigma Project of 1995 and in the Action Plan for 2004-2006.

Two bilingual communities, Catalonia and the Basque Country, have been implementing CLIL through English, their respective regional languages and Castilian since the mid 1990s.

Castilla-La Mancha first introduced bilingual programmes in 1996 when the Spanish Ministry of Education signed agreements with the British Council and the French Government regarding the establishment of "bilingual" education programmes in state schools. This resulted in two separate programmes: Spanish-English and Spanish-French, which were implemented in a limited number of schools in the region.

In 2005, the central government of Spain transferred responsibility for education to the autonomous government, *Junta de Comunidades de Castilla-La Mancha (JCCM)*, and thus the bilingual agreement also became their responsibility. The *JCCM* government extended the MEC-British Council Agreement to 2010, and in 2006 they introduced a new project, *Secciones Europeas* (DOCM, 7-02-2005), which allowed other schools to join in the bilingual programmes.

During the period 1996-2005, only 7 primary schools of the region joined the MEC-British Council Agreement. This number has risen to 73 schools in the academic year 2008-2009, of which 28 are Primary Education Schools, and 28 are Secondary Education Schools (DOCM 93, 04/05/07, [www.educa.jccm.es/educa-jccm/cm/educa\\_jccm](http://www.educa.jccm.es/educa-jccm/cm/educa_jccm)).

As can be inferred, the use of *bilingual* refers to the teaching of the curriculum through a foreign language, and not instruction through a second language of the region (Van Essen, A. 1998; Marsh, D. 1998), as Castilla-La Mancha has only Castilian as its official language.

In this study we focus on the schools of primary and secondary education of Castilla-La Mancha where the foreign language of choice is English, and therefore the contents are taught in English. However, schools teaching through French as a foreign language have also been analysed in terms of the implementation of programmes and teacher training.

## Current teacher training

Until 2005, training for teachers was provided by the British Council in its centre for languages at the Alcalá de Henares University. It also supplied advisors for the English programme in the Spanish state schools. The British Council also offered non compulsory INSET training and visits to schools of primary or secondary education in the UK.

Given that these services offered by the British Council entailed considerable expense for the JCCM, the autonomous government introduced the new programme *Secciones Europeas* into the region. This allowed the training for teachers to be provided through collaboration between the Ministry of Education of the central government of Spain and the regional Education Authority: *Consejería de Educación y Ciencia* of the JCCM. The program is known by the acronym *PALE*, which stands for *Programa de Apoyo al Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras*. ([www.educa.jccm.es](http://www.educa.jccm.es)). It consists of:

- 1: a one month intensive language course in the Official Spanish School of Languages, *Escuela Oficial de idiomas*;
- 2: about three days of INSET training in methodologies for teaching contents through a foreign language;
- 3: a stay of at least two weeks in a primary or secondary school in a country where the target language is spoken.

The first part of the training program is intended to provide teachers with enough knowledge of the target language to teach in this language. The second part is carried out in centres that provide teachers with INSET training called *C.E.P. (Centro de Profesores)*. It permits them to be in contact with teachers belonging to centres where the programme has been implemented enables them to share in-class experiences and useful information. Finally, they spend a job-shadowing period abroad, learning about teaching methodologies and resources in use there.

The three phases of the training take place in the first year of participation in the programme. The level of English required does not allow teachers with a low level of knowledge of the target language to enter the programme.

## Teachers' Qualifications

### Primary school teachers

In order to achieve Qualified Teacher Status and enter the teaching profession in Spain, university graduates of Educational Sciences and those with a Teaching Diploma have to sit a competitive state exam called *Concurso oposición al cuerpo de maestros de educación infantil y primaria*. The exam is organised, usually once every two years, by the Department of Education of the autonomous government, and information relating to requirements and contents of the exam is included in the official bulletin (*Diario Oficial de Castilla-La Mancha*, *DOCM* for abbreviation). The most recent bulletin containing these details was published 26th March, 2007 (<http://docm.jccm.es>).

There are no prerequisites regarding foreign language skills except for those intending to be specialist foreign language teachers. There is no special category for bilingual school teachers as it is considered to be an integral part of primary school education. Candidates must first enter the general body of *maestros*, or at least pass the first exam. If they are specialists of a foreign language, this is indicated with a code number which shows that they are available to be called as replacement or supply teachers in bilingual schools.

### Secondary school teachers

Entering the teaching profession at secondary school is also by competitive state exam, the requirements for which are to have a degree in any subject, Biology, History, English, Chemistry, etc; and to have obtained a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education.

There is no specific exam category for access to bilingual schools because bilingual programmes are considered a general part of secondary education. The newly-qualified teachers must first enter the body of *profesores de educación secundaria*, or at least pass the first exam. The secondary teachers indicate the highest course of the *Escuela oficial de idiomas* they have passed in order to testify their skills in foreign languages, and certificates of international language exams are also considered a bonus.

## Current Implementation of CLIL in Schools of Castilla-La Mancha

### a. Primary Schools

#### a.1. Compulsory education

Each primary school wanting to take part in the bilingual programme since 2005 has had to go through a two-step approval system: firstly by the teaching staff of the school, called *claustro*; and secondly by the school board, *consejo escolar* in Spanish, composed of the management team, a member of the administration services, and a proportionate number of teachers and parents.

The application appoints a team of teachers, usually English teachers, to be responsible for the leadership of the programme. Competence in a second language is not yet required for all primary teachers in Spain, which is not in line with the recommendation of the European Action Plan for Languages 2004-2006.

When the school team of teachers needs help with the implementation of the programme, the *JCCM Consejería de Educación y Ciencia* provides assessment and arranges collaboration from other teachers who have been involved in the implementation of bilingual programmes at other schools, and can therefore offer advice.

Generalist primary teachers can teach any subject ranging from Mathematics, Spanish, Social and Environmental Sciences. In addition to foreign languages, Music, Art and Physical Education are taught by specialist teachers.

The schools we have contacted based the selection of the subjects to be taught in English on the individual skills of the teachers interested in the bilingual programme. Most of them have chosen English, and as non linguistic disciplines (NLD), Environmental Science and either Art or Music.

English is always one of the subjects taught in English, which may seem a rather odd notion. Not so if one takes into account that in most primary schools in Spain (Navés, T. 1998), the English subject class is not conducted in English but in Spanish and only the specific exercises performed by pupils are corrected in the target language. This methodology entails 4 sessions of 45 minutes per week, of which only 40% is taught in English. In real terms, this means that the contact time with English for a pupil is reduced to just 40% of the class time at best.

The time distribution of English-Spanish that most of the schools involved in the bilingual programme apply is the following: 100% in English for English as a second language, and a distribution between 60% and 40%, or 50% and 50% English-Spanish, for the other two subjects which are non linguistic disciplines. The contact time with English is dramatically higher when compared with schools outside the programme, and this contributes positively to the final outcome.

### **a.2. Non compulsory education**

Pupils of ages from 3 to 6 years are enrolled in primary schools in *Educación Infantil*. This cycle does not have a subject distribution like primary schools. In this cycle, the schools involved in the bilingual programme develop the initial sessions, called Assemblies, in English. This is the time when teachers receive pupils and talk about the organization of the day, sing English songs, and use simple questions and expressions with pupils. They have English classes as well, that amount to two or three sessions of about 45 minutes with 100% English exposure. The contact time with English for this age range is also crucially higher when compared with the two-three sessions of 45 minutes per week that other schools have, with much less than 50% of this time dedicated to using English as a vehicular language. It is widely known that in the early years (Muñoz, C. 1999) it is very important to be exposed to other languages and cultures in order to favour the assimilation of this information in later stages of the child's life.

### **b. Secondary Schools**

The steps to follow for a secondary school to enter the programme are the same as for primary as regards approvals and choice of teachers in charge of the bilingual programme. The age of pupils enrolled in these schools ranges from 12 to 16 years, covering 4 years of *Educación Secundaria Obligatoria* up to the school leaving age.

At secondary level, the teachers are not generalist teachers but subject specialists. All of them have a major in a specific subject such as Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, History, French, English, etc., but additional foreign languages skills are not required. The choice of subjects taught in English therefore depends very much on the foreign language competence of the individual teachers working at the school, and, as a result, a higher variation of subjects taught in English was found among the secondary schools contacted. All include English, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences, but a few schools have chosen Review Sessions, Music and Art, or Technology.

The English contact time amounts to about 5 sessions of 50 minutes per week with 100% exposure in English as English subject classes. In the NLD, the contact with English amounts to about 6 sessions of 50 minutes per week for Natural and Social Sciences, tending to be in the ratio of 70%-30% English-Spanish usage, except for one school where teachers use 100% English in these subjects. There are also 3 more sessions lasting the same time for each of the other three NLD considered.

The team of secondary teachers in charge of the programme is always composed of the English teachers, and those of other subjects who consider themselves able to teach his/her subject in English. Official certifications of language skills are not required to proceed with the programme.

As in primary schools, if there is a group of teachers in secondary schools interested in going ahead with the bilingual programme and who need some assessment, the *JCCM* government provides support with the personal resources required.

## Conclusions on the current implementation

### a. Primary schools

The implementation currently being carried out in primary schools is following the scheme well and involving foreign language teachers that are also general teachers and who teach content through the foreign language.

However, it is evident that not all teachers entering state schools of Castilla-La Mancha fulfil the requirements of the Action Plan 2004-2006 regarding competence of a second language for university students. The Action Plan also makes a recommendation that students “should study abroad, preferably in a foreign language, for at least one term, and should gain accepted language qualifications as part of their degree course”. This recommendation is not met either by older teachers or by more than 80% of students of the Schools of *Magisterio* (Teacher Training). For instance, in a typical Primary School of Castilla-La Mancha, out of a set of about 30 teachers in the school, only those specialized in foreign languages can speak a foreign language fluently, which amounts to 5 or 6 members of staff. This means that 15-20% of teachers speak English fluently; the rest cannot speak a foreign language.

The greatest problem seems to arise when the teachers initially concerned with the bilingual programme in the school need to be replaced for some reason. There is a lack of qualified teachers that fit this profile. It could be due to the fact that the diploma of *maestro* in the *Escuela Magisterio* of the University of Castilla-La Mancha, and of any other Spanish University, does not as yet include any course related to bilingual education as part of the regular curriculum.

Therefore, the main drawback we observe is the lack of or low number of teachers qualified to take part in bilingual programmes in state schools. About 25% of the teachers in the schools contacted have indicated this problem of substitution of teachers, and one school reported that it is really impossible for them to implement the programme successfully because they don't have enough teachers in their school and those sent by the *Delegación de Educación y Ciencia de Guadalajara* do not fulfil the minimum requirements for the process of teaching in a foreign language: they could speak but not teach in English, even though they have the teaching diploma in English.

We can conclude that the way in which teacher training is carried out up to now therefore needs considerable improvement, both at university level and in INSET training.

### b. Secondary Schools

It is more difficult for secondary schools to decide to enter a bilingual programme because of the currently low number of teachers with foreign language skills. Due to the fact that teachers in these schools are subject teachers, the lack of qualified people is even more marked than in primary schools. When any of the teachers involved in the bilingual program need to be replaced, the *Delegación de Educación y Ciencia* of the corresponding province of the region sends an English teacher; 99% of these are lacking in adequate knowledge for teaching the specific subject content.

Again it is evident that the main drawback relates to teacher *training* and to the organizational weaknesses, such as the lack of lists of suitable teachers available for bilingual schools.

## Future recommendations

### a. Regarding teachers' qualifications and initial teacher training

#### a.1. Primary school teachers

The weakest point in teachers' qualifications is the lack of or low competence level in foreign languages. This problem could be solved by reinforcing this field in the new curriculum of the *Escuelas de Magisterio* that is currently being developed for the adaptation to the European Higher Education Area.

Students in the *Magisterio* School need to be provided with the means to improve their learning of foreign languages. To this end, the following recommendations are made:

- To raise the level of English courses for students specializing in subjects other than foreign languages, in order to fulfil the European Action Plan of 2004-2006;
- To include specific courses on teaching contents through a foreign language (CLIL) as part of the general curriculum of the *Escuelas de Magisterio*, as is to be found in Austria (<http://www.factworld.info/materials.htm#EUP>), and other European countries.
- To focus on the development of departments of continuing education at universities.

#### a.2. Secondary school teachers

Due to the fact that the weakest point detected is the lack of fluency in foreign languages of subject teachers, (Suárez, M.L., 2006), the fulfilment of the 2004-2006 Action Plan of European Union is recommended in terms of foreign language abilities for teachers.

Regarding methodologies for teaching subjects through a foreign language, the inclusion of a CLIL course as part of the training of subject teachers at postgraduate level could also be considered. One example of where this has been taken into account is in the Masters' course designed at the School of Education Sciences of the *Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona*, due to begin in the next academic year (Márquez, C, 2008).

### b. Regarding INSET courses

An appropriate INSET training course is offered to teachers who enter the Secciones Europeas programme, but for only a short period of time. They take part in the PALE program during the first year but no further CLIL capacity building opportunities are offered later on. This is considered insufficient by teachers involved.

To make the INSET training more complete, it could be included as part of the continuing education programme that the JCCM offers through the *Centros de Profesores*, or in collaboration with the schools of *Magisterio* of the *Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha*.

At the moment, only one Master level course is available, offered by the Alcalá de Henares University, ([http://www2.uah.es/master\\_tefl\\_alcala](http://www2.uah.es/master_tefl_alcala)) an institution which also collaborates with the University of Castilla-La Mancha. The course is run by the Modern Languages Department, and not by the Schools of Education. Teachers participate on a purely voluntary basis and finance the training themselves.

### c. Regarding the Autonomous Government

As happens in Andalucía, another well known non-bilingual autonomous region of Spain, the autonomous government should promote the implementation of plurilingualism through a clear policy followed by all the schools in the region, not only by some of them.

In order to achieve the proposals of bilingual education, a tremendous effort must be made in our region. Firstly, regarding the use of a foreign language among citizens in general, the idea that it is only needed for academic purposes should be discarded; secondly, greater financial support must be directed towards training bilingual teachers, with financial incentives rewarding their efforts to be included in the bilingual programmes. These steps are crucial if we wish to develop bilingual minds in our children and achieve the aims of the bilingual education process.

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DOCM. Diario Oficial Castilla - La Mancha  
<http://docm.jccm.es>

Portal de Educación de la Junta de Comunidades de Castilla - La Mancha <http://www.educa.jccm.es>

European Commission - Education & Training  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/languages/download/david\\_marshall-report.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/languages/download/david_marshall-report.pdf)).